



NEXTGEN
EUROPE
YOUTH
ECOVILLAGE
NETWORK

NextGEN Europe

2022 Report



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Cover photo

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1. Introduction

We are approaching the end of 2022, which has been a fruitful and interesting year for us in NextGEN Europe. We are excited to share our first yearly report, with some highlights from the year that has passed and with some plans for the year ahead. We hope you will enjoy the reading and join us on our journey to connect youth around the topic of ecovillages.

1.1 Let's present ourselves

NextGEN Europe is officially a working group within GEN Europe, the European Ecovillage Network. For this reason, some refer to us as the “youth branch” of GEN Europe. As with all the GEN working groups and branches, our structure follows the principles of sociocracy, with different circles and areas. The core team of NextGEN Europe, also called the “*delegates circle*”, currently consists of the following eight people, the delegates.



Filippo Ceschi

Finance coordinator



Riccardo De Amici

Link to NextGEN International



Luna D'Angelo

Link to Yes to Sustainability



Dijana Čataković



Franziska Reissig

Link to GEN Europe



Alex Lema Marques

**Sharing Circle
coordinator**



Lars Michael
Stockhausen Hektoen

**Fundraising
coordinator**



Tiziano Biagi

Social Media Manager



NextGEN Europe organizational map

1.2 Short history of NextGEN Europe

NextGEN Europe was founded in 2006 during the GEN Europe 10+ conference in Findhorn, together with NextGENOA (the group working in Asia, Oceania, and Australia), as a response to a lack of involvement of youth in the GEN movement. Since the beginning, the two NextGEN regions kept their connection thriving via the Youth Council. With the little budget at their disposal, the NextGEN early members focused on bringing the youth's perspective into GEN and to reach young people in communities. Over the years, NextGEN developed very significant and tangible projects. One of the best examples is [Bridgedale360](#), the result of a KA2 Erasmus+ project involving seven European organisations including GEN Europe. The output of this strategic partnership is an online platform that brings together guides and tools designed to empower youth to take initiative towards the creation of a socially just and sustainable world.

At the same time, NextGEN Europe has always had a less defined role as well, providing a safe space for young people to share ideas and getting involved in common processes. Something similar happened to the connection between NextGEN and GEN Europe, which fluctuated throughout the years.

For the last 16 years, NextGEN relied on the support of **GAIA Trust**, which financed the whole Global Ecovillage Network for over twenty years. But from next year, we will no longer receive this funding. Although this could initially challenge our work, it also represents an opportunity to rethink our vision and goals, imagine ways to expand our network and seek new resources to sustain our activities.

If you are curious to know more about NextGEN's history, we encourage you to visit our [super-duper online timeline](#) and read about it there in a more interactive way. More on the timeline project itself can be found further in this report, under the section “Youth Council”.



One of the early meetings of NextGEN members

2. What happened in 2022?

In this section, you will find the highlights of the year, including the events we co-organized and participated in, and updates from the work areas of NextGEN Europe, like the Sharing Circle, the Youth Council, Yes to Sustainability and more.

2.1 Sharing Circle

The Sharing Circle is probably the most exciting and vibrant activity that NextGEN Europe has been hosting and growing continuously over the past couple of years. It is the go-to place for youths passionate about ecovillages and a major entry point into the NextGEN network, as well as in the world of GEN. Interestingly, most of our current delegates got to know about NextGEN through the Sharing Circle!

The Sharing Circle is an online space where young people from all across Europe interested in ecovillages and regenerative cultures can connect. It consists of a Whatsapp group where people often share volunteering and training opportunities in ecovillages as well as doubts and questions that they have about the topics of ecovillage lifestyle and sustainability. In addition to the Whatsapp group, NextGEN takes care of hosting a monthly facilitated Zoom call in which people can meet, update each other and attend (or hold!) online workshops. The participants of the Sharing Circle are encouraged to step forward and collaborate with us, for example by facilitating some of the monthly Zoom calls, or holding workshops in their fields of expertise in case this aligns with the topics of interest of the group.

The Sharing Circle can be a space of arrival for young people interested in ecovillages. Oftentimes, ecovillages can be a place where people cultivate a different way of relating to each other, to themselves and to their surroundings, given the values and practices present in such communities. The Sharing Circle aspires to be a virtual space to cultivate such values and practices, and contribute to connecting, empowering, and inspiring young people.

After actively coordinating the Sharing Circle for several years, our friend Mattias slowly stepped down from his role as coordinator, causing the Sharing Circle to undergo a transition that even put it on hold for several months before our new coordinator, Alex, took over in May 2022. From that moment on, the chat blossomed with new energy, the Zoom calls went back to their monthly schedule (sometimes even more often than that!) and people started engaging more and more, taking the lead in offering workshops and facilitating the calls.

On average we had between six to eleven people attending each Zoom call. The online meetings became an opportunity for people to meet other youths and learn more about the network and inspiring regenerative projects all around Europe. The youth-led workshops were a major success. In particular, we would like to mention the “Systems Thinking” workshop, held by Sven Lake, two workshops focused on finding personal purpose, facilitated by Lisa Lena Horvath, and the one on presenting the Auroville Ecovillage, where Riccardo De Amici, one of the delegates, shared about his experience living there. And more are about to come!

From our side, there’s been increasing attention and effort to welcome new people into the group, survey the group’s interests and wishes and coordinate the Zoom calls, which were all brilliantly managed by Alex.

Looking into the future, we envision a growing network and we imagine the Sharing Circle continuing to be a place for youths to approach the ecovillage network and NextGEN, to connect, collaborate and be inspired by each other. People’s ideas and initiatives are welcome, and Alex and the rest of the team will keep working to support them.

For more information, [click here](#).



A screenshot from a Sharing Circle

2. 2 Yes to Sustainability

Yes to Sustainability (YTS) was born as a project during a GEN Europe training, and grew into an international network of young people and youth workers whose aim is to help young people experience life in ecovillages and other sustainable projects. These opportunities are offered through Erasmus+ Youth Exchanges, Training and volunteering opportunities through the European Solidarity Corps. The vision of YTS is a world where young people are empowered to create resilient communities, contribute to regenerative cultures, and take care of the planet.

Since we share the goal of bringing young people closer to ecovillages and sustainable living NextGEN is working closely with YTS. On a practical level, NextGEN is keeping track of the finances for YTS.

In 2022, Yes to Sustainability organized nine Erasmus+ Youth Exchanges and five Erasmus+ Youth Trainings. All the projects were organized as sustainably as possible: the venues chosen for the projects were ecovillages or, in a few cases, family farms, the food provided was local, organic and vegan or vegetarian, and as much zero-waste as possible. In addition to that, participants were encouraged to travel in a green way, avoiding flying except when strictly necessary and choosing trains or buses over cars. Some of the topics addressed in the Youth Exchanges were the four dimensions of sustainability, spirituality and nature rituals, self-development, environmentally friendly daily life, permaculture, bio-construction and community building. The Youth Training focused on how to write and organize sustainable Youth Exchanges and how to become a youth leader.

If you want to know more about Yes to Sustainability, you can visit their [website](#), follow them on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#), join the [YTS Facebook group](#) where you can find Youth Exchanges and Training opportunities or send them an email at yestosustainability@gmail.com.



Participants of a YTS Youth Exchange



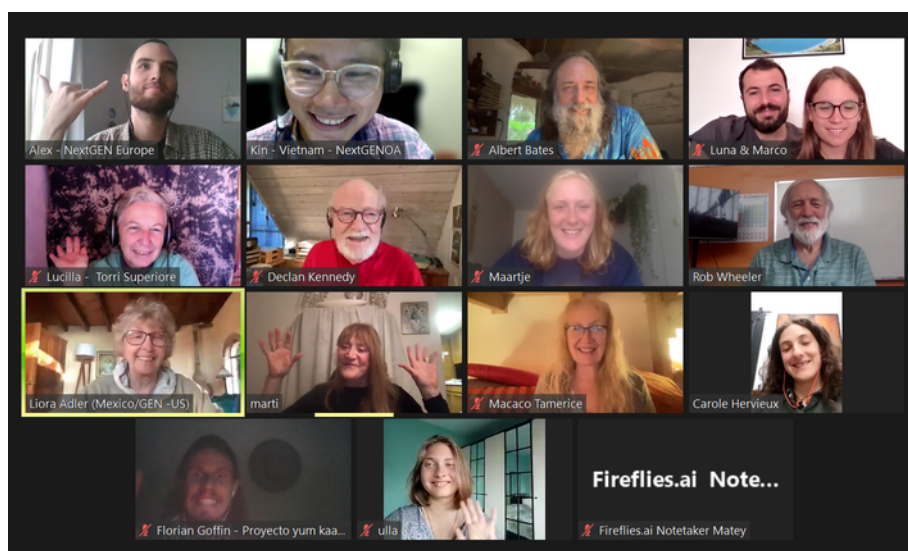
Participants of the From Grey to Green: Sustainability and regeneration through 4 dimensions Youth Exchange in Slovenia



Some of the members of the Yes to Sustainability team during a Team Project Meeting in 2022

2.3 Youth Council

The Youth Council is the international NextGEN Council, where two representatives from each NextGEN Region come together every month to coordinate and update each other. Thanks to their work, everyone involved in the different NextGEN regions around the world is aware of projects and initiatives in other countries and can connect to create new partnerships or foster existing ones. The Youth Council has its own projects that are carried out in cooperation or with the support of one or more NextGEN regions. Finally, two members of the Youth Council sit on the Network Stewards Circle of GEN. This circle acts as the General Assembly of the Global Ecovillage Network. Our voice is helping to shape the direction of the entire network! Some exciting projects in 2022 were surely the first **NextGEN Online Global Gathering**, the **GEN Elders & NextGEN calls** and the **GEN timeline project**.



A screenshot from GEN Elders & NextGEN call

The [GEN Timeline](#) is a project that emerged from a series of meetings between GEN Elders and NextGEN members in the last months of 2021. The result is a webpage containing three different timelines created in collaboration between Lucilla, Daniel, Marti, Rob, Albert and other GEN Elders and Lou and Alex on the NextGEN side. One of the timelines is specifically dedicated to the history of NextGEN, while the other two travel through the history of GEN and its work. Thanks to this project, we learned more about GEN and NextGEN history and felt even more part of the ecovillage movement.

2.4 Financial report

2022 has been the “teenage year” for NextGEN Europe and the whole GEN Network. As mentioned, **this was the last year in which we received** financial support from **Gaia Trust**. As it was the last year of the grant, we only received £1000, about two-thirds of the amount received in the previous years. 2023 will be the first year where we have to completely stand on our own feet and find new ways to financially sustain ourselves. **You can be a vital part of the puzzle for us to do that.** More on that in the next chapter of the report.

Thanks to the 2021 “**Year-end campaign**”, led by our former fundraiser Luna, we started this year receiving over **900€ in donations, a huge success for us!**

Therefore, in January, we could plan the year counting on a total budget of about 4400€, consisting of the remaining funds from the Gaia Trust grant from previous years, the last Gaia trust grant of 2022 and the newly raised money.

This is how we decided to allocate our budget in 2022:

€ 200,00	National Networks Meeting 2023 participation support
€ 200,00	NextGEN National Networks support
€ 200,00	GEN Europe Gathering 2022 Youth Strand Coordinator
€ 1.200,00	GEN Europe Gathering 2022 Tickets and Travel Support for 6 people
€ 625,00	Social Media Manager / Content Creator (50 hours)
€ 150,00	Finance Coordination
€ 170,68	Zoom account for NextGEN Europe
€ 300,00	Sharing Circle Fund (2 hours preparation per month)
€ 625,00	Fundraising Fund
€ 350,00	Video presentation of NextGEN Europe
€ 379,75	Emergency Fund
€ 4.400,434	TOTAL

The main expense of the year was definitely the GEN Europe Gathering in Denmark. Five out of eight delegates joined the event with the financial support of NextGEN Europe and Riccardo received remuneration for the coordination of the Youth Strand Workshops.

2.5 NextGEN Online Global Gathering

In June, we worked alongside all the other NextGEN regions and organized the first NextGEN Online Global Gathering! The two-day event was designed and facilitated by members of the NextGEN Youth Council, a working group made up of two representatives from each NextGEN region.

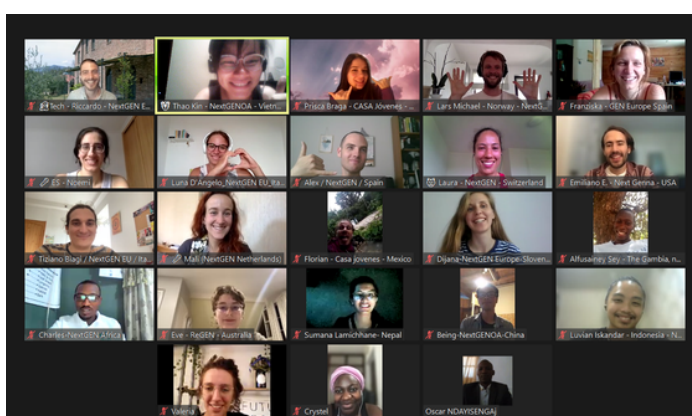
The Global Gathering was born out of the wish to create a space where NextGEN members can get to know each other, network, inspire and celebrate. We also envisioned widening our circle and connecting young people interested in the ecovillage movement.

The Gathering was an opportunity to discover and learn about the work of the different NextGEN regions around the world and their regenerative projects, and it offered a space to share ideas, foster collaborations, and nurture mutual understanding through cultural diversity and art.

The sessions were based on interpersonal connection and network weaving, allowing participants to interact with each other. Participants also had the chance to co-create sessions and host open spaces sharing their skills and talents, such as poetry and music. Overall, the event was a great success and was joined by youths from over 20 countries around the world. In these two days packed with activities, participants heard from communities and sustainable projects all around the globe, connected with each other and learned more about the work of NextGEN in each continent.



NextGEN Global Gathering poster



A screenshot from the NextGEN Global Gathering

2.6 European Ecovillage Gathering

One of the highlights of this year was the NextGEN participation in the European Ecovillage Gathering, organized by GEN Europe and held in the [Ananda Gaorii community in Denmark](#) in July. This year's Gathering was the first one to take place in over two years because of Covid. Meeting again in person was a joyful and much-needed experience. NextGEN Europe decided to invest a considerable amount of its budget to enable **five delegates** (more than half of the whole team!) to participate. We took this decision to ensure that NextGEN would be well-represented at the most popular yearly ecovillage gathering and to allow a significant portion of our team to meet in person, reconnect and build stronger bonds which will help with better collaboration and teamwork in the future.

At the Gathering, our delegates not only had the chance to attend workshops individually but **also to host and co-host four workshops:**

1. *The work of NextGEN and Yes to Sustainability*
2. *Cyclical living*
3. *Connecting NextGEN with GEN elders*
4. *Surrendering to egoless shared unity*

In addition, we also had a stand representing NextGEN at the “**Meet the Ecovillages**” session, where different ecovillages and communities got a chance to present themselves and their projects. We made sure to be present to answer any questions and collected the contacts of young people to enlarge our network.

If you would like to get a better understanding of the Ecovillage Global Gathering, you can take a look at the [pictures](#) and [video](#), or read [Nara Petrovič's article](#).



Members of NextGEN at the European Ecovillage Gathering 2022



Participants at the European Ecovillage Gathering

2.7 National networks updates

In autumn 2022, after some ups and downs, the core team of [NextGEN Netherlands](#) started meeting and engaging in regular activities again. They have been sharing opportunities related to ecovillages within their [Telegram](#) group of nearly 100 people and have been working closely with climate activists of Extinction Rebellion, for example hosting a movie night on climate action. Members of NextGEN Netherlands also worked as volunteers at a regenerative farm and are planning to organize an Ecovillage tour where they will visit ecovillages in the Netherlands together. Moreover, they attended the networking weekend of GEN Netherlands, to broaden their network.

One of our main focuses in the next year will be to support youths in Ukraine and Poland to create their NextGEN national groups.

2.8 New team constellation

This year saw an important shift in the NextGEN delegates team as we had four new people joining the team: Lars Michael, Alex, Tiziano and Franziska joined in 2022! Meanwhile, Luna moved on from being the Fundraising Coordinator and became a new link to the Youth Council, together with Riccardo, and Lou left the team in November after having served in the Youth Council for several years.

3. What's next?

3.1 Vision and goals for 2023

On the 20th of November 2022 the Next GEN Delegates Circle gathered to recalibrate the mission of NextGEN for the next year. We also reviewed how the vision of NextGEN International and Next GEN Europe are resonating within our group.

Our vision

*NextGEN aspires to unleash the **passion, creativity, and action** of **young people**, infuse it with the **power of community** and direct it towards co-creating a **regenerative, peaceful and connective** culture while building bridges of **love, empowerment, and possibility**.*

January 2023

NextGEN will be part of the National Network Meeting of GEN Europe

Two or three representatives of NextGEN will meet with the other networks of GEN Europe in the beautiful ecovillage Torri Superiore, in the North of Italy. This event will focus on networking, peer learning, and creating projects together to increase and improve international collaboration. One of the wishes of this meeting is to create a foundation to help national youth networks to evolve.

Summer 2023

European Ecovillage Gathering in Nature Community, Germany

The next Gathering will take place between the 12th and 17th of July in Nature Community in Bavaria, Germany. Tickets and info can be found on the Gathering website. At the Gathering, NextGEN will be even more involved in organizing sessions and activities. We cannot anticipate more just yet, so make sure to follow us on social media to not miss our updates!

We love learning!

In October, we applied for an Erasmus+ Training for the NextGEN Network! The Skills for NextGENeration training is going to be all about the great tools the ecovillage movement has to offer, ranging from Deep ecology to CLIPS and Sociocracy, as well as Social Justice. Fingers crossed that the result of our application will be public later in December, so fingers crossed! We will keep you posted and, hopefully, we will meet you at our training in Germany!

Supporting the creation of NextGEN National Networks

We love to discover and connect with young people from all over Europe, but we also know that working on a regional level is extremely important too. That is why we want to help creating National Networks in different European countries. Recently, we saw NextGEN Netherlands growing, but at the same time, other former National Networks have been less and less active. The good news is that there are new National Networks evolving, for example, NextGEN Poland! We are currently working on a proposal on how to support their vision. In addition, there seems to be interest among Ukrainian youth in creating NextGEN Ukraine in the near future too.

Our Sharing Circle has been growing and evolving!

...and we want this to continue. As you have already read in this letter, we are very happy with how active and engaged the WhatsApp group and the Sharing Circle have become. We want to keep up this success, by creating a safe space for everyone to be part of this community!

We want to build a proper newsletter!

Our goal is to stay in touch with you and reach as many young people as possible in the ecovillage movement. That is why we would like to send you extensive reports and sneak peaks like this a few times a year! Let's see how we are going to make this happen to keep you posted and engaged in what is going on in NextGEN Europe (and beyond!).

Keep building coherence in our working group

This is a tricky and exciting one. As delegates, we are working together regularly but from different parts of Europe, and this means that we have to put extra emphasis on working coherently. To ensure that, we will continue to improve our working culture!

3.2 Help us make all of this and more possible with a donation

The Global Ecovillage Network has been so lucky to receive financial support since its beginning in 1995 by the Gaia Trust, which is coming to an end in 2022. Therefore, we need to come up with creative ways to raise money and keep NextGEN alive and thriving.

Today, you can support NextGEN Europe with a donation!

If you resonate with our work and values and you feel that you would like to contribute to the growth and future of this network, please make a donation.

Here is how you can support us

Via bank transfer to the bank account of GEN Europe
(IMPORTANT: specify “for NextGEN Europe”)

Bank details

RECIPIENT: Global Ecovillage Network of Europe e.V.

IBAN: DE11 1001 0010 0007 6811 05

BIC/SWIFT: PBNKDEFF

REASON: Donation for **NextGEN Europe**

You can find more information about NextGEN Europe on [our website](#), on our [Facebook page](#) and on our [Instagram account](#).



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